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4. *Botrychium lanceolatum*, Angstrom. Specimens fleshy but not showing any marked variation.

5. *Botrychium ternatum*, Swz. Specimens variable, most of them nearer the *obliquum* form than the type, and very fleshy.

6. *Botrychium Virginianum*, Swz. Specimens (2 in number) small, but one of them especially interesting, having two perfect fronds from the same rootstock. In this instance it is clearly apparent from the manner in which the base of the stipe of one frond sheathes the base of the other, that the bud which should not have developed until another year had pushed out prematurely and developed soon after the regular frond. The two individual fronds had grown to very nearly the same height and dimensions. The bud for the third year's growth lies snugly tucked away in the vertical slit at the base of what should have been the second year's frond, and a repetition of the condition described could not have been expected another season as in the instances mentioned in *B. Lunaria*, where the branched rootstock had made the permanent existence of two individuals possible.

7. *Polypodium vulgare*, L. A single small plant.

8. *Cryptogramme acrostichoides*, R. Br. A large number of fine specimens among which I find two fronds partly fertile and partly sterile, the two lowermost pairs of pinnæ being wholly sterile in one, and with a few scattered sori in the other; the upper portion of both fronds being contracted in fruit exactly as in the other fertile fronds.

9. *Asplenium Filix-fœmina*, Bernh. A single small frond.

10. *Phegopteris Dryopteris*, Fee. Specimens characteristic, but the fertile somewhat more rigid than usual.

11. *Aspidium Lonchitis*, Swz. Specimens mostly small, but characteristic. A single double-fronded specimen occurs caused by the cohering together of the bases of two stipites.

12. *Aspidium Oreopteris*, Swz. Specimens collected late, and not in good condition.

13. *Aspidium spinulosum*, Swz. A large number of specimens mostly of the *dilatatum* form.

14. *Cystopteris fragilis*, Bernh. Specimens showing the usual variations so characteristic of the species. A single frond forks above the lowermost pair of pinnæ into a two-branched top.—GEO. E. DAVENPORT, *Medford, Mass.*

The Postage Question.—WASHINGTON, D. C., July 1, 1882.

EDITOR BOTANICAL GAZETTE:

Dear Sir—The note of Mr. Trelease on "The Postage on Botanical Specimens," published in your June number (p. 73), still leaves the question open as to what kind of labels will be allowed to go with the specimens, many supposing

that so far as botanists are concerned, the old liberal ruling is still in force, and that the statement on page 234 of the "Guide to the Flora of Washington and Vicinity," was wholly incorrect. While for one I should only be too glad if this were the case, I still presume that the chief desire of all botanists is to know precisely how the laws are construed by the Post Office Department at the present time, and with this object in view I have not only revisited the Department, but have corresponded officially with it, and if not trespassing too largely upon your columns, I would be glad to have the correspondence published. It seems to cover the whole ground and may render further inquiries unnecessary.

I desire to say, however, in advance, that the statement in my flora was too strong and really inaccurate, and especially, that the word "third-class" was an error for *fourth-class*, which was overlooked in reading the proof.

Very truly yours,

LESTER F. WARD.

NATIONAL MUSEUM,

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 21, 1882.

HON. TIMOTHY O. HOWE, Postmaster General:

Sir—I enclose a leaf from Bulletin, No. 22, of the National Museum, of which I am the author, upon which [p. 234] are marked passages relating to the sending of written labels with botanical specimens.

Since the publication of the Bulletin the Department has been asked whether the statements therein were correct, and has replied by sending copies of the Postal regulations of February 21, 1881, and calling special attention to the 7th exception by underscoring the word "name" on the last line but one, which action has been published in the BOTANICAL GAZETTE (June 1882, p. 73).

The impression seems to prevail that this exception will apply to botanical labels made out in the usual way, of which three samples are inclosed within.

As labels without *authority*, *locality*, or *date*, are of no scientific value it is supposed that these would be construed as necessary "for purposes of identification," and therefore legal.

You are respectfully requested to state whether the Department so construes the regulation, and if not, to indicate such portions of the inclosed labels as would be illegal, and to return the same for the information of the profession, who, rest assured, need only to know the law in order to comply with it.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

LESTER F. WARD.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF FIRST ASS'T POSTMASTER GENERAL,
WASHINGTON, D. C., June 24, 1882.

LESTER F. WARD, ESQ., National Museum, Washington, D. C.:

Sir—Your communication of the 21st inst., addressed to the Postmaster General, has been referred to this office for reply.

The labels submitted by you, so far as they contain simply the name of the plant, and as necessary to fix that name, the name of the person making the classification, adding, as part of the name, the variety, and the name of the person classifying, will be held to be within the language of the Statutes. But it is impossible, by any fair construction, to authorize a statement of the kind of soil in which the plant grows, or the locality from which it comes, or the date at which the plant is obtained, or the date at which it flowers, or yields fruit.

All these descriptive matters might be placed upon the label, by the use of a gelatine pad, thus making a reproduction of the matter; or, by the use of a hand stamp. You are respectfully referred to Rulings 319 and 320, January Postal Guide, 1882, page 719, a copy of which will be sent to you, through the Post Office.

Your labels and communication are respectfully returned.

Very respectfully,

E. C. FOWLER,
For First Assistant Postmaster General.

Decumaria barbara.—On May 29th of this year, in company with Dr. Frank Baker, I paid a brief visit to the Dismal Swamp of Virginia. My principal object was to find if possible that handsome vine, *Decumaria barbara*, L., which I had seen in the swamp in 1876, when, in company with Prof. Chickering and Mr. Morong, I had enjoyed a three days' sojourn in that wilderness of amber-colored waters.

As on that occasion the plant was not seen till we had penetrated far into the swamp on what is known as the Jericho Canal to near the open lake, and as on the present one, starting from Bowers Hill Station on the Seaboard & Roanoake R. R., we could only find ditches that would lead us in a distance of about two miles, we were by no means sanguine of success. But successful we were, and found many large and beautiful vines climbing the great gum trees. They were in full bloom and the problem was to reach the flowers.

As your readers probably know, this vine climbs by means of fine rootlets, after the manner of *Rhus Toxicodendron*, which it much resembles in many other respects, and with which it vies in the Dismal Swamp for the possession of the finest supports. To climb to the lowest flowering branches was impossible, and after reaching the verge of despair, the thought struck us of severing a